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# Universally Preferable Behaviour: A Rational Proof Of Secular Ethics



UNIVERSALLY  
PREFERABLE  
BEHAVIOUR

A RATIONAL PROOF OF  
SECULAR ETHICS

STEFAN MOLYNEUX



## Synopsis

Stefan Molyneux, MA, is the host of Freedomain Radio, the largest and most popular philosophy show on the web. Freedomain Radio was a Top 10 finalist in the 'Education' category in the 2007-2010 Podcast Awards, and has been named one of the 'Top 100 Most Inspiring and Innovative Blogs for Educators.' In many fairy tales, there lives a terrible beast of stupendous power, a dragon or a basilisk, which tyrannizes the surrounding lands. The local villagers tremble before this monster; they sacrifice their animals, pay money and blood in the hopes of appeasing its murderous impulses. Year after year, decade after decade, wave after wave of hopeful champions try to match their strength, virtue and cunning against this terrible tyrant. Try â€œ and fail. Inevitably, a man steps forward who strikes everyone as utterly incongruous. He is a stable boy, a shoemakerâ€™s son, a bakerâ€™s apprentice â€œ or sometimes, just a vagabond. This book is the story of my personal assault on just such a beast. This â€œbeastâ€• is the belief that it is impossible to define an objective, rational, secular and scientific ethical system. This â€œbeastâ€• is the illusion that morality must forever be lost in the irrational swamps of gods and governments, forever lacking logical justification and clear definition...

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Excellent book providing Universal Values that's not dogmatic or religious in nature.

Lots of great information , a bit repetitive and hard to read without doozing

This review is less about the content of the E-book (which is decent, albeit flawed), and more about how the E-book works with the Android Kindle app. Simply put, the E-book is bugged. I was going through the book page-by-page on the Kindle app, and at a fairly early point in the book, I came across a completely blank page. I turned the page to the next one, and it was a completely blank page. I turned that one, and it was blank as well. After going through this about 20 times, I figured out that the page counter was not changing. It was literally the same blank page over and over and over again. I had to manually go to a specific page in order to bypass the bugged content and continue my read. The bug happens in the Android Kindle app, which includes the app used in the Kindle Fire tablet (or at least the version used in the 2015 Kindle Fire -- the \$49 tablet). It doesn't show up in the Cloud reader, and it doesn't show up in the desktop app. I don't know if it affects the iOS app, though. In the end, I got frustrated with it and went to Stefan's site to download the PDF version. I have been reading the book using Adobe's Android reader, instead. I would prefer to use the Kindle app, but that's not an option until this bug is fixed.

revealing

This book on PUB is valid and accurate. The premises posited are pragmatic and readily understandable. The author challenges the reader to embark on a logical journey devoid of mysticism and false realities. This may be uncomfortable for some at times but the end result is quite rewarding. I highly recommend this book.

I decided to buy this book after first seeing a really great lecture by the author called "The Power of The Parasite Class". Having heard that lecture, I expected to like his book. Unfortunately, I was very disappointed by it. In the beginning of the book, Molyneux seems to be promising to give us a new argument for morality that is completely different from the Objectivist one (that life is the root of all value) for he seems to be criticizing the Objectivist view when he states: "Ethics cannot be objectively defined as 'that which is good for man's survival'. Certain individuals can survive very well by preying on others, so this definition of ethics does not overcome the problem of

subjectivism."To come up with something different would be quite an accomplishment if he could pull it off, so I was waiting in anticipation to see what this new argument was going to be. I eventually came to it and here it was:"all matter is subject to physical rules - and everything that lives is in addition subject to certain requirements, and thus, if it is alive, must have followed universally preferable behaviours. Life, for instance, requires fuel and oxygen...thus it is impossible that anyone can logically argue against universally preferable behaviour, since if he is alive to argue, he must have followed universally preferable behaviours such as breathing, eating and drinking" My question is: What's the difference between this argument and the one he criticized at the beginning of the book? Can't a person eat and drink by stealing food and water from others? If so, doesn't Molyneux's argument fall prey to the same problems? If not, if predation does not actually promote one's survival as well as production and trade does, and thus production and trade are universally preferable to predation, then isn't Molyneux's argument, although valid, simply a rehashing of what Objectivists have been saying for the past fifty years? To be fair, maybe I am simply expecting too much from the book. If UPB is meant to simply be an entertaining and thought provoking essay about ethical theory written for beginners, then it succeeds in that respect. However, the foreword implies to the reader that much more is going to be offered and yet it never delivers. For a truly thorough defense of secular ethics, I would suggest Tara Smith's *Viable Values: A Study of Life as the Root and Reward of Morality* instead. Tom Blackstone, Author of *Philosophy: What It Is and Why We Need It*.

Universally Preferable Behavior- in some ways so simple a child could understand it. Yet at the same time complex and revolutionary. Worth your full attention and focus.

Not for everyone but definitely for me.

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